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REGIONAL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES ON EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Report by the secretariat

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Introduction

1. The objective of the Review and Appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies on Equality, Development and Peace is to carry out an assessment of progress made and obstacles encountered in the implementation of such strategies, as well as to highlight the new priorities for action for the advancement of women in the countries concerned.

2. The present report, which is an attempt to carry out this objective, is based on the 13 national reports of ECE member States which were available at the time of its preparation (see list of reporting countries in Annex). This report cannot therefore be considered exhaustive in presenting the major trends in terms of the advancement of women in the region. However, it confirms the findings of the substantive documentation prepared by the secretariat. Furthermore, the High-level Regional Preparatory Meeting will offer an opportunity to extend and complete this presentation through the interventions which will be made by national delegations in this respect.

3. For the present report, the available material has been organized in three major groups in order to highlight both convergencies and differentiations among the countries covered by the document. Section I reviews the major changes in the economic situation of women since the adoption of the 1985 Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies (NFLS) under two sub-headings, namely (a) rates of participation, employment and unemployment, and (b) conditions of work and equality of remuneration. Section II describes progress made and results achieved in three areas; (a) enhancing the human resource potential of women, (b) reconciling work with family responsibilities and (c) implementation of international conventions and standards. Section III, "Some future policy proposals", delineates proposals which are being considered by Governments to improve the status of women in the future. Finally, Section IV, "Some Conclusions", makes some preliminary observations which may support the deliberations during the Meeting.

I. REVIEW OF THE MAJOR CHANGES IN THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF WOMEN

4. As mentioned before, the changes highlighted in the national reports received so far illustrate the trends analysed in the substantive documentation prepared for the Meeting. 1/ Most of the reporting countries show a deterioration in the economic environment which has led to a sharp rise in levels of unemployment whilst the quality of unemployment has also deteriorated. In several of the reporting countries, about 50% of all unemployed have been out of work for 12 months or more. Also, in contrast to the early 1980s, unemployment is being increasingly concentrated amongst prime age group (22 to 44 years) workers. Although female workers in this prime age have been absorbed in the services sector, it is frequently as involuntary part-time workers. It appears that about half of the service sector employees are women in most countries, the highest concentration being in health services, office and clerical jobs, banks and information services.

1/ See: Reports by the secretariat on Trends in Women's Role in the Economy (E/ECE/RW/HLM/2), Women's Access to Employment and Entrepreneurship (E/ECE/RW/HLM/4) and the Role of Women in the transition processes (E/ECE/RW/HLM/5).

5. The percentage of labour force, particularly its female component outside the unemployment register, may have increased. This may be inferred from the information on the increasing number of women undergoing public training schemes, those who have accepted early retirement and/or who have withdrawn from the labour market after long periods of seeking work.

6. At the same time the allocation of public resources to social expenditures has deteriorated. The pressure on the budget in some countries has led to cutting down of public expenditures, particularly in health and education, which has adversely influenced the well-being of women and the family.

(a) Rates of participation, employment and unemployment

7. The relative deterioration in the economic environment since the late 1970s has left a sharp imprint on the conditions under which women contribute to the economic life of the ECE region. During the earlier decade, from 1970 to 1980, the economic conditions for the advancement of women had generally improved. This was reflected particularly in the increase in the rates of women's participation in the labour force of almost all countries of the region. During that period, the share of women in the labour force had increased as a result of rapid growth and sustained structural change. There was a substantial shift in the structural composition of the economy which brought about significant changes in women's integration into the labour market. Rapidly expanding social facilities and services created a positive framework for the reduction of economic inequalities, particularly affecting women.

8. The mid-1980s, in contrast, began with adverse implications for women's labour force participation by narrowing their choices of occupation in the organized sectors of most economies and leading to higher rates of unemployment in some countries. Economic restructuring primarily affected the male occupations in the organized sector of several economies. It thereby added rigidities in the existing occupational segregation of the labour market.

9. The reports review these trends within the framework of a decline in population growth and an increase in the number of women in the greying population of over 65 years. The percentage of women pensioners is higher than that of men, as reported by Bulgaria and Norway. There appears to be a direct correlation between lower rates of fertility and higher rates of participation in the labour force of some countries, such as France and Bulgaria.

10. According to recent data provided by several national reports, it appears that women's position in the labour force has not fundamentally changed in terms of occupational segregation. The increasing number of women in the economically active population is accompanied by a parallel rise in part-time employment in the service sector of most countries. The statistical distinction between women employees who are married/co-habiting or in the category of single mothers is now becoming less relevant although most countries continue to tabulate statistics employing traditional categories. In most countries of the region, women did not withdraw from the labour force irrespective of their marital status and number of children, even when their jobs were precarious and tenuous. As the share of female headed families

steadily increased, more and more women were seeking full-time paid work, but ending up in only part-time jobs of varying hours of work. The increase in part-time jobs in the region has been a contributory factor to increased occupational segregation and continued inequality in economic rewards, salaries and benefits.

11. From the evidence presented in the reports, it seems that the number employed in traditionally female occupations has increased. Only in two countries, Sweden and Norway, was there a slight increase in the female share of male dominated occupations following affirmative action by Governments. The concentration of women in certain sectors of the economy continues to be significant. For example, in France, among 31 occupational categories, the six most "feminized", where 60% of women are employed, relate to public service, administrative and commercial enterprises, domestic workers, teachers and assistant social workers. The twelve occupations with the highest percentage of women are described in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Concentration of women's employment
in specific sectors in France, 1990

The 12 occupations with the highest percentage of women		
Occupation	Percentage of women	Total (thousands)
Mother's helps, childminders and family workers	99.66	261
Nursery nurses	99.90	13
Midwives	99.56	11
Manicurists, salaries beauticians	99.26	12
Senior secretarial staff, executives' secretaries (non-management)	98.59	117
Domestic employees, charwomen	98.16	178
Secretaries	97.64	719
Unpaid family helpers or administrative or commercial staff working in cottage industries	96.14	116
Social assistants	95.64	37
Cashiers	94.69	131
Switchboard and telephone operators	93.52	37
Receptionists and information clerks	92.96	37

Source: INSEE, population census of 1990

12. The above trends are supported by evidence from other reporting countries. For example, the share of economically active women rose in Sweden from 77% in 1980 to 85% in 1990, but the fall in economic growth in the early

1990s lead to a decline in the share of economically active women to 81% in 1993. The report of this country shows an increase in working hours of women in the 1980s. Women had increasingly opted for full-time jobs and many of them had raised their hours from "short part-time" (maximum 19 hours) to long part-time (20-34 hours) or to near full-time (35 hours or more). This was the result of the economic recession, when the employment of women took a downward turn. Earlier, in 1985, the unemployment rate for women has been the same as that of men. Since 1990, more men than women in all age groups are employed. Women's employment rate is higher than that of men in only eight of Sweden's 24 counties.

13. In Denmark the occupational status of both men and women also changed between 1985 and 1991. In 1991, the labour force comprised of nearly three million persons of whom 46.6% were women. There too, the number of women with part-time employment increased, as a result of changes in the structure of output.

14. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, women were more seriously affected by unemployment than men, though the percentage difference was slight. For example, in the age groups of 20 to 24 years, 25 to 34 years and especially 55 to 59 years women formed the majority of the unemployed in Sweden and in Denmark. According to the national report of Finland: "The central social problem of the early 1990s is unemployment; working life being strictly divided according to gender, unemployment has affected women at different times and in different ways than men".

15. According to the national report submitted by Canada, "More women are employed, in more occupations and in more decision-making positions than ever before". The percentage of women in the labour force, however, has fallen somewhat in recent years as a result of the overall downturn in the economy. In 1993, 57.5% of women were in the labour force, compared to 58.4% in 1990. Between 1975 and 1993, the total number of women in the labour force rose by 71%, that is from 3.7 to 6.3 million. As a result by 1993 58% of all women aged 15 and over were either employed or looking for work, as compared to 44% in 1975. They experience increasing difficulties in finding new jobs, remain unemployed longer and more frequently, become discouraged workers and leave the labour force because they believe there is no work available to them. The figures for racial minority women and aboriginal women showed that there is a differential impact of discrimination on their access to employment. For example, in 1990 the unemployment rate for aboriginal women was 21.6% compared to 10.8% for all other Canadian women. Racial minority women represented 4.3% of the total workforce in 1991 compared to 2.9% in 1986. "Despite a slight increase of racial minority women in upper management occupations from 0.4% in 1986 to 0.5% in 1991, there has been a decrease in the professional category from 13.2% to 12.9% for the same period. The vast majority are concentrated in low-paying clerical and service jobs". (see Report, pp 44-45). This point is illustrated in Table 2.

16. The proportion of women in the workforce in the United Kingdom continued to increase. According to the report, "[it] is the second highest rate in the European Union ". About 47% of women employees work part-time, "the great majority because they wish to do so". Women are under-represented in science and technology and top jobs in business. A new trend is that a growing proportion of women are self-employed, including managers and administrators (Summary points of the Report, p.2).

Table 2

Distribution of employment by occupation,
1981 and 1993 in Canada

	1981			1993		
	% of women	% of men	Women as % of employment	% of women	% of men	Women as % of employment
Managerial/ administrative	5.4	9.9	27.4	12.6	14.3	42.2
Natural sciences	1.4	5.2	15.6	1.5	5.8	18.0
Social sciences/ religion	1.8	1.6	42.6	3.1	2.0	56.2
Teaching	5.8	3.0	56.7	7.0	3.0	65.8
Doctors/dentists	0.3(1)	0.8(1)	18.3(1)	0.4	0.8x	xx
Nursing/therapy/other health related	8.9(1)	1.1(1)	85.1(1)	9.3	1.1	xx.x
Artistic Literary/ recreational	1.4	1.4	39.5	2.0	2.1	44.4
Clerical	34.3	6.4	78.4	27.7	5.7	80.2
Sales	10.1	10.4	39.5	9.7	9.9	45.1
Service	18.3	10.1	55.0	17.2	10.9	56.8
Primary	2.9	8.4	18.9	2.4	6.9	22.4
Manufacturing	7.3	20.5	19.4	4.6	17.2	18.2
Construction	0.2	10.0	1.4	0.2	9.2	2.2
Transport equipment operating	0.6	5.9	6.1	0.7	5.9	8.9
Material handling/ other crafts	1.8	5.2	18.9	1.5	4.7	21.0
Total	100.0	100.0	40.4	100.0	100.0	45.4
Total (000s)	4,445	6,556	...	5,630	6,753	...

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue 71-220 and 71-529, and the Labour Force Survey

17. In France, seeking paid work outside the home is also becoming the general norm, adding 150,000 women to the labour force annually since 1982, according to INSEE. Women now constitute 44% of the economically active population. There too the increase in the number of women working outside the home has been linked to the decline in industrial employment, which was earlier considered to be the male domain. The technological advances making physical work lighter and the emergence of new technical occupations without gender bias have been additional factors.

18. In Portugal, women's participation in the labour market has also increased rapidly since the 1980s. In 1980, 1985 and 1993, this increase was recorded as 38.7% to 40.8% to 44.8% respectively, but the unemployment rate of women was higher - 6.6% compared to that of men which was 4.7% (Summary of the

national report, p.4). And yet, Portugal has registered one of the lowest rates of part-time work.

19. The summary highlights of the national report of the Russian Federation indicates that between 1980 to 1993, the share of women in the total employment decreased from 51 to 49.2%. In 1993, the total number of women employed was 35 million, 80% of whom were in the "reproductive age group". In Bulgaria 48.7% of women were employed in the state sector in 1992 and 48.2% in 1993, while the percentage in the private sector was 40.5 and 41 respectively. According to the national report of Bulgaria, there was a steady fall in 1992 and 1993 in the number of women employed. "In spite of the high unemployment rate, women still constitute almost half of the persons employed in state and cooperative enterprises according to the National Employment Office" (Report, p.15). (See Table 3)

Table 3

Persons employed in State and Cooperative Enterprises
in Bulgaria, 1992-1993
(in millions)

Branch	1992		1993	
	Total	Women	Total	Women
TOTAL	2.50	1.30	2.12	1.10
Industry	0.96	0.46	0.84	0.39
Construction	0.16	0.03	0.12	0.03
Agriculture	0.30	0.13	0.16	0.63
Forestry	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01
Transport	0.10	0.04	0.15	0.35
Communication	0.04	0.28	0.04	0.28
Trade, material and technical supplying, & purchase by other branches	0.16	0.11	0.13	0.86

Source: National Employment Office

20. The unemployment situation has become extremely difficult in Bulgaria, due to the sharp decline in production and the relatively small part played by the private sector. According to recent data (December 1993) the number of registered unemployed was on the rise. More than half the total unemployed of 626,141 were women, the majority in industry and agriculture. Similarly, in Lithuania, although comprehensive statistics on employment and unemployment have not been provided, the total number of single-parent families consisting of mother and children are reported to have increased since 1989. In 1994, the percentage of women unemployed in urban areas was 3.5% as compared to 3.1% for men. But these statistics do not take into account "those workers who are forced to take prolonged unpaid holidays or to work part-time due to the

lack of raw materials". In 12 regions of the Russian Federation, 90% of all unemployed were women in 1993. The highlights of the report of the Russian Federation suggest that the average time of registered unemployment is 4.6 months for women and less than 2 months for men.

(b) Conditions of work and equality of remuneration

21. The last decade witnessed a greater need for additional earnings by women for the maintenance of the family. At the same time, women's access to equal opportunities in employment in order to earn an adequate income showed a downward trend. Furthermore, several national reports suggest that wherever there was higher unemployment among women, families witnessed a serious decline in their standard of living. The differential impact of unemployment of men and women may be also surmised from the increase in female headed households, reported in almost all countries of the region. When men are unemployed, there is a pressure for international migration which, in turn, imposes excessive hardships on women left behind with the principal responsibility for the family's survival.

22. Yet the myth that men should be the providers of the family continues. For example, a survey in France showed that the majority of the population believed men to be the main providers. Official statistics, however, indicate that the number of women seeking work or willing to work increased from 29% in 1978 to 49% in 1988.

23. As noted earlier, women form a relatively small part of the workforce in manufacturing in the ECE region. The majority of women workers are employed in services. This has implications on the income earning capacity of women as compared to mens. The pay differential between women and men is generally wider among non-manual workers than manual workers, although the reports do not classify pay differentials on this basis. The information provided by several countries disputes the earlier notion that the male/female earning gap was due to the higher qualifications of the average male. The national report from Sweden sums up this problem: "The existing gap in pay levels which can be seen in the major groups can be partly explained by the fact that women and men work in different occupations, in different sectors of employment, at different levels and on different work schedules. Many women work part-time, which also explains why women earn less. However, there are pay differences which cannot be explained. Research indicates, for example, that even if women and men have comparable education, men still get better average pay than women". (Report, pp.49-50). An analysis of average salaries of employees in various sectors by level of education in 1992 in that country supported this point - the higher the level of education, the larger the pay differential between women and men.

24. The national report of Finland gives additional information on this point: "Education alone does not bring women an equal status in working life. In spite of their good education and high motivation, women's career development is slower and their wage level remains lower than men's". In recent years, both trade unions and employers' organizations have proposed re-evaluation of jobs as a central means for narrowing down pay differentials (Report, p.8).

25. Women's wage levels and wage trends from 1980 to 1992 analysed in the report of Norway show that their average wage income amounts to half that of

men. A comparison of men and women with full-time jobs, however, narrowed this gap; women's wages amounted on average to approximately 80% of men's wages. Again, this gap is not explained by differences in educational qualifications. Table 4 below indicates that income trends measured in terms of mean gross personal income have been more favourable for women than for men but it has to be made clearer. However, for all sources of income, the situation at the outset was less favourable for women than for men.

Table 4

Income trends for men and women by source of income:
1982, 1985, 1990 and 1991
(index for fixed prices 1982 = 100)

	Women				Men			
	1982	1985	1990	1991	1982	1985	1990	1991
Gross income	100	108	128	134	100	101	108	108
Wage income	100	103	120	128	100	101	103	103
Pension	100	114	136	138	100	124	144	155
Self-employment	100	119	157	158	100	81	86	84
Capital income	100	141	193	196	100	118	180	187

Source: Income and Wealth Surveys, Statistics Norway

26. In the Netherlands, the principle of equality is enshrined in the Policy Plan of 1985, which guaranteed equality in employment and remuneration. However, women's increased participation in the labcur market, mainly in part-time and precarious occupations, continues to create inequalities in income-earning opportunities. "The legal position and career perspectives of part-timers are not on a par with full-time workers". (Summary of the Netherlands Report, p.4.).

27. The national report of France relates the paradox of unequal pay to the specific situation of women in the labour market and to their role in the family and the private sphere which exposes them to poverty and at the same time protects them from being socially excluded.

28. The pay differentials between women and men also persist in the Russian Federation and Bulgaria, despite the fact that the principle of equality of remuneration has been promoted by special policy measures. In practice, it has been found that women were in professions which were earlier considered to be "prestigious" such as medicine, teaching and dentistry. But when the number of women increased in these professions, it began to have an adverse impact on the relative level of their salaries. In the Russian Federation, in spite of women's higher level of education and professional training, they continue to be in the lower grades of the manufacturing sector. On average, the salary of women was about one-third less than that of men in 1992.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES (NFLS)

(a) Enhancing the Human Resource Potential of Women

29. A number of issues have been raised by the reporting countries in this area which is a basic component of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies, mainly related to the finding that educational qualifications continue to have an insignificant effect on occupational segregation by sex. Women appear to be in different streams of educational attainment and fields of specialization, and have not yet emerged in larger numbers in scientific and technical fields. The effects of positive action programmes and other specific policy measures to channel women into traditionally male dominated occupations have not yet become statistically visible except in countries such as Sweden, Norway and Canada.

30. In most countries of the ECE region, women have not crossed the heavily guarded bridge from equality of education to equality in economic life. According to recent information, educational parity has been attained by women in several countries but this achievement has not been translated into equal opportunities in the labour market. The report from Finland underlines that, while education has improved women's status both in working life and in social activities, women's career development is slower and wage levels remain lower than men's.

31. Since the 1980s, about 52% of all students in Denmark were women which has improved their educational levels compared to men. During the period 1982 to 1992, there were also a number of reforms in vocational education which have channelled women away from so-called "women's occupations", such as social and health training. From 1987 to 1982, the percentage of women Ph.D. students increased from 23 to 33%.

32. In Sweden, equality within university and higher educational institutions was made a legal requirement by the 1992 Higher Education Act. A ten point programme was established in 1993 with the main aim of increasing the proportion of women in post-graduate studies. It was found that boys chose subjects such as engineering and natural sciences while girls chose languages and nursing. This had happened despite the fact that home economics, technology and textile handicrafts are compulsory for both sexes. Even when teachers and school administrators took active measures to promote equal opportunities, children were influenced by the social environment at home and the way they were socially treated as boys and girls.

33. In Canada, women's participation in traditionally male dominated professions has increased: in 1993, women accounted for 27% of all doctors, dentists and other health professionals, up from 18% in 1982. There was also a sharp increase in the proportion of women employed in management and administrative positions. In 1993, 40% of those working in one of these categories were women, up from 27% in 1981. "However, it should be noted that as much as 40% of this increase may actually be attributable to changes in occupational definitions." (Report, p.44).

34. In France, there has been a general upgrading of the level of education of girls, who have been reaching higher levels of achievement in diplomas and degrees. In 1982, only 25% of those in the category of non-manual occupations were women; in 1990, their number increased to 31%. Similarly, in the United

Kingdom, girls are currently out-performing boys in science subjects in examinations in age groups 16 to 18. The position of women in further and higher education has generally continued to improve, with women accounting for more than half the enrolment in further education courses. In Portugal, the percentage of women's participation in higher education has shown only a slight change since 1980, but here too they have achieved equality in numbers. The statistics as provided by the national report were: in secondary eduction 53.2% (1980), 53.1% (1985) and 52.7% (1991); while in higher education the percentages for 1980, 1985 and 1991 were 43.9%, 49.7% and 55.5% respectively.

35. From the statistical information provided by the Government of Bulgaria it appears that women and men have also achieved parity at all levels of education. For example, women make up 50.4% of the total number of students in secondary schools and 47.6% in technical secondary schools. They account for 55.6% of the total number of economically active persons with academic education. On 31 December 1991, women made up 28.6% of the total number of scientists, 30.43% of professors and 5.26% with doctorates. Among social scientists, women constituted 51.88%. In Kazakhstan, 68.6% of women have completed their secondary school education, while 11.6% obtain university diplomas.

(b) Reconciling work with family responsibilities

36. Combining work outside the home and continuing to be nourisher and care-givers of the family has presented serious difficulties for women. There has been some progress since the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies, but the solutions to this problem have remained partial, as most national reports indicate. The trends of the 1980s continue with a slight change in the division of labour between women and men in sharing household work. Women continue to be responsible for major household tasks, such as housework, child care, and family illness. Neither the economy nor society seems to have made basic adjustments. The interconnections between paid and unpaid work continue to be elusive as suggested by some of the reports. For example, the report of Finland warns that there is a risk of transferring to the home the tasks of nursing and care, to be performed by women as unpaid work (Report, p.5).

(i) Maternity benefits, day care and household work

37. As suggested earlier, more and more women with one or two children have entered the labour market since the 1980s. This trend has, in turn, influenced the fertility rate in some countries of the region. For example in Sweden, the fertility rate per woman was 2.1 in 1992 - among the highest in Western Europe. The rise in the fertility rate was preceded by a substantial day care development programme and the introduction of parental insurance. Similarly, after a long period of declining birthrate in Denmark, there has been a steady increase in the number of live-born children since 1991.

38. To support women to continue to be in the labour market and to lighten their family responsibilities, some Governments are making concerted efforts to enhance maternity pay and leave arrangements, as in the United Kingdom. Its report states that child care provisions are growing to meet increased demand largely without Government intervention. The Government encourages growth in child care provisions with its employment and health initiatives which include the provision of some 50,000 new and after-school holiday child

care places for the over-fives for the next three years (Summary of the Report, p.3).

39. In France, reconciling professional life and family responsibility also continues to be difficult, as this is generally perceived to be essentially a woman's problem. This perception emerges from the division of labour within the household which continues to be imbalanced. In that country, women who exercise a profession devote on an average five hours per day to household tasks compared to men whose input is two hours and forty minutes, that is approximately half (Report, pp.34-35). The distribution of work in the home in Norway is also unequal; women spend three times as many hours in housework and twice as many on care of the family as men. By and large, maintenance and repairs account for a large proportion of housework carried out by men.

40. In general, the number of places for children in day care institutions has steadily increased in the Nordic Countries. Since 1978, it has been possible for fathers to share maternity benefits including parental leave with the mothers. In practice, however, statistics show that in 1991 only 2% of men have used this right in Norway. In the 1980s, the maternity benefit period in Norway was only 18 weeks; in 1990, it was increased to 28 weeks with full pay or 35 weeks with 80% pay. As of April 1993, the maternity benefit was further extended to 42 weeks with full pay or 52 weeks with 80% pay. In Denmark, the coverage of day care institutions also show great improvement; more than 64% of all babies (6-24 months) in 1994 were taken care of in the public day care system. There was a net improvement in Sweden in the percentage of married men using their parental benefit for childbirth. The percentage of married men using their parental leave increased from 22 to 39 in 1990. Three out of ten men started in 1990 to use their "benefit days" earlier than three months after the child was born.

41. Maternity benefits and leave provisions have also steadily improved in Bulgaria, where employed women are entitled to pregnancy and childbirth or adoption paid leave as follows: first child 120 days; second 150 days; third 180 days and all others 120 days. After the full maternity paid leave expires and if the children are not in a child care institution, employed women are entitled to paid leave for the rearing of the first, second and third child until it is two years old, and for six months leave for each next child (Report, pp. 13-15). Maternity leave and benefits have an adverse impact on women's employment as "in a number of instances, employers prefer to fill vacancies by men or by very young women."

(ii) Women in public life and decision-making

42. The general trend from the evidence provided by some national reports appears to be a relative increase in the number of women in public life. The statistical analysis indicates that the number of women in public life is greater in municipal, local and district level positions than at the top level of Government, ministries and parliaments. Thus, preliminary observation leads to the conclusion that if a pyramid were to be constructed of women in public life, it would show the largest number at the base; as the level gets higher and higher, the numbers get smaller and smaller until the apex, where they almost disappear.

43. The national report of Sweden has described the problem of inequality in decision-making: "Even if women have a relatively strong position in

Parliament, municipalities and county councils, much still remains to be done in this field as in other decision-making assemblies." The number of women in Parliament more than doubled between 1971 and 1985. "Between 1985 and 1988, there was an increase of 7 percentage points in the number of women MPs (from 31 to 38%), while in the 1991 election, there was a decline of 5 percentage points." The 1994 September election is expected to result in a substantial increase of female parliamentarians (see below). The present Speaker of the Parliament is a woman.

44. In Portugal, after a significant increase in women's participation at all levels during 1975 to 1985, the percentage of women in parliament has remained steady thereafter. Of 18 ministers in the present Government, two are women; of 52 Secretaries of State, four are women. The change is not only in the numbers involved but also in the portfolios which were traditionally the male domain, for example budget, finance, justice and planning. In the United Kingdom, the position of women in public life is considered to be limited. Women's representation in local authorities and on other public bodies have increased to around one in four and one in three places respectively. Their influence in key decision-making areas, such as national Parliament, and posts in the judiciary and international affairs has not improved.

45. In the countries in transition recent data show a decline in the number of women in parliaments and Government ministries, which could be a transient problem. Between 1980 and 1985 in the Russian Federation, women in parliament constituted 35%, as a result of the introduction of the quota system. After quotas were abolished, their share in the State Duma decreased to 5.3% and in the Federal Council to 8.9%. In October 1993, the founding of a political movement "Women of Russia" had the following impact on the percentages of women deputies in parliament: the total percentage is 11.4%, of which 5.6% are in the Federal Council and 13.6% in the State Duma. In Lithuania, the number of women participating in parliamentary assemblies has shown a decline since 1980. For example, in 1980 and 1985 the number of men and women in the parliament was 225 and 125 respectively; in 1994, however, the number of men decreased from 225 to 131 whilst the number of women decreased from 125 to 10. In the local representative bodies there hhasbeen hardly any appreciable change. This may reflect the changes in the electoral system, rather than rates in participation in assemblies.

(c) Implementation of international conventions and standards

46. Most of the national reports suggest that the implementation of the internationcal instruments recently adopted by the United Nations is of particular relevance for future policies. The Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) and the United Nations Declaration against Violence in the Family (1991) were referred to by a number of Governments. The Ministerial Meeting of the Council of Europe in October 1993 adopted a Declaration on opposing violence against women in Europe. Several Governments have provided data and information on this subject.

47. At their June 1994 annual conference, the federal-provincial/territorial Ministries responsible for the status of women in Canada endorsed the Regina Declaration on the Rights of Women Subjected to Violence. Furthermore, the Government will pursue a two-fold approach in terms of human rights: it will "promote equal rights for women as a matter of social justice and in accordance with internationally agreed values .... and encourage the

empowerment of women within the context of their own cultures while recognizing that gender equity is not just a women's issue but a societal, economic and political issue".

48. The United Kingdom reported a much greater awareness of the issue of violence against women, in particular the relatively high prevalence of domestic assaults. A new Ministerial Interdepartmental Working Group has been set up to improve the response from agencies. The national report for Portugal mentions that "it is increasingly recognized that the issue of women's rights is a basic human rights issue and not a marginal question regarding women only but rather the whole of society". The Netherlands report also emphasizes the issue of sexual violence which was the subject of special attention during the period under review. Government policy focuses not only on the victims but also on the perpetrators of sexual violence. The persistence of basic inequality as regards violence is also commented upon in the national report of France, according to which specific violence against women has come out of the darkness and acquired greater visibility under the pressure and inspiration of women's movements.

49. All the Nordic Countries mention the problem of sexual violence with varying degrees of emphasis. For example, the national report from Sweden considers violence against women as an issue of power, underlining that the term itself covers a wide range of gender specific acts committed against women by men who, in many cases, have or have had close relations with the victims. According to this report, there is a strong link between violence against women and the lack of equality. Finland emphasizes its commitment to eliminate and prevent violence against women as well as to aid the victims of violence and to change the behaviour of the perpetrators of the acts of violence. Norway has ratified a number of international conventions providing for legal protection of women's rights, including the European Convention of Human Rights and relevant International Labour Organization standards promoting equal treatment of men and women.

50. The Republic of Bulgaria takes a strong view of violence against women, highlighting the International Convention for the Suppression of the Trafficking of Persons and the Prostitution of Others. The new draft of its Penal Code stipulates strict penalties for rape and other cases of violence against women. In 1992, of 795 cases of rape, 693 were detected; and of 818 cases of rape in 1993, 724 cases were detected and criminals captured.

III. SOME FUTURE POLICY PROPOSALS

51. Most countries have reiterated their commitment to undertake active measures to promote the status of women. The evidence from some countries of the ECE region reflects their specific efforts to establish special mechanisms to promote equality between women and men. The nature and size of these mechanisms vary from country to country and is often reflected in the modification and alteration of existing legislation. There have been some efforts, including equality plans or equality laws, to introduce better coordination at Government Ministries level to advocate actively equality policies through administrative restructuring and innovative regulations. In view of the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, some countries, for example Sweden and the United Kingdom, are instituting new mechanisms on equality and adopting new anti-discrimination legislation.

52. Information provided by some Governments of the ECE Region shows that, since the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies were adopted in June 1985, many efforts have been made to secure formal coordination of government policy on women's issues. For example, the Government of Canada is developing a coordinated Federal plan to address women's equality and safety. It will also release a discussion paper on social security reform in the near future which will provide the necessary tools for women and men to get back into the workforce, enter the workforce for the first time or stay employed. In the United Kingdom, a Ministerial Group on women's issues was established to improve national coordination and was upgraded to a Cabinet Sub-committee in 1992. In addition, the Women's Issues Working Group provides the Secretary of State with personal advice on equal opportunities. Independent Equal Opportunities Commissions are responsible for working towards the elimination of discrimination, and the Women's National Commission acts to ensure that women's views are given due weight in Government. Since the adoption of the sex equality legislation in the United Kingdom in the mid-seventies, personnel policies and practices of business enterprises follow these provisions. Since 1990 they include the right to bring complaints of equal pay, equal retirement age, and equality in the contributions and benefits for women and men in occupational pensions. In the Netherlands, an Emancipation Policy Plan was formulated in 1985 to achieve equal opportunities, rights, freedoms and responsibilities regardless of gender and social status. Policy tools made available to the Government are legislation, affirmative action, subsidies, research and information.

53. In Sweden, to ensure better coordination among its own ministries, the Minister for Equality Affairs was given the responsibility for supervising, checking and approving each proposed appointment before it was submitted to the Cabinet. In 1988, Parliament passed legislation on policy for equality between women and men up to the mid-1990s, which contained a five year Plan of Action comprising the role of women in the economy, equality in the labour market, education of the family and finally the influence of women. Starting with an overall share of 60% in 1987, women constituted 30% of board members in Government authorities by 1992. In 1988, the Government also adopted a three year programme which established concrete time-specific targets to increase the proportion of women on boards and committees. The number of women is expected to increase by 40% by 1995, according to Government strategy.

54. The Swedish Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman is responsible for advising and informing the general public to promote equality in working life, schools, higher education and labour market training. Since 1985, considerable efforts have been undertaken to make work at the regional and local levels more efficient by carrying out surveys on the situation of women in the labour market in their respective counties. There is a proposal to make funds available to set up a Focal Point for Equality in each of the 24 counties. An Equal Opportunities Act adopted on 1 January 1992 dealt with equal opportunities issues, including violence against women. In 1994, another bill was presented to Parliament entitled "shared power/shared responsibility" to provide an opportunity for a longer term approach to equality policies.

55. In Denmark, after several years of debate the necessary majority was finally obtained in Parliament, in April 1994, to adopt an anti-discrimination law which will attempt to propagate equal opportunities for women and men. As

a result of the ratification by Finland in 1982 of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, an Act on Equality between women and men was enacted to prohibit discrimination based on gender in all fields of social life, making it obligatory on the part of Government authorities to promote actively equality between the sexes. This was amended in 1992 to promote equality of remuneration in both the public and the private sector.

56. In Norway, the Equal Status Council, which since 1980 has concentrated on working hours, wages and municipal equal status committees, has now turned its attention to women and the economy, equal pay, sexual violence and the role of women in European development. In order to achieve more efficient integration on women's issues, several efforts are being made in the 1990s to restructure the existing Equal Status Secretariat.

57. In Lithuania, the earlier mechanisms in operation from 1980 to 1985 to promote the advancement of women have become inoperative. On 11 March 1994, the Government established a State Coursellor on women's issues who has an office in the Government, but whose terms of reference have not been yet been established. In Bulgaria, information provided in the national report indicates that no special policy has yet been established with regard to safeguarding the rights of women since the introduction of structural reforms on 10 November 1989. It is recognized that the de jure equality of women with men does not automatically lead to their de facto equality in all spheres of political, economic and public life, despite official policy aimed at the strict implementation of the principle of equality of sexes.

IV. SOME CONCLUSIONS

58. It appears that the increase in the participation rates of women in the labour force as well as their share in total employment has globally increased. However, this trend needs to be qualified as indicated in Section I of this report. The structural transformation of most countries of the region has continued in favour of expanding the important service sector and reducing the share of agriculture and industry in gross domestic product. In some countries this increase is related to feminine occupations in the service sector of the respective economies. It has been observed that the percentage increase thus reflects changes in the structure of the labour demand.

59. A problem of great concern is the increase in the level of unemployment of women compared to men. Structural adjustment in the manufacturing sector has led to growing unemployment of women workers in almost every country for which information is available. The phenomenon has implications in two areas: firstly, that most women seeking work and whose prolonged efforts to find work has proved unsuccessful, have temporarily retired from the labour market; and secondly, the unemployment of women as opposed to men has had an adverse impact on the satisfaction of basic needs of the family.

60. Declining growth rates and rising unemployment combined with structural transformation has also signified that more and more women are working part-time and, in many cases, for few hours of paid work. The existing occupational segregation has further accentuated this phenomenon. This trend is leading to the creation of dominantly part-time and precarious occupations, mostly employing women as a special underclass.

61. Consequently, progress towards equality of remuneration has either stalled or slowed down depending upon the country concerned. A disturbing trend in this direction is that even in cases where women have received equivalent or even higher education in relation to men, the inequalities of remuneration have continued. It would seem that the total remuneration received by women workers as a group may have declined in relation to the 1980s.

62. The reconciliation between women's participation in working life and their unpaid family responsibilities continues to be an area of concern at the policy level. There is some evidence to show that the work hours devoted by women to child care and care of the elderly have increased. The positive feature in sharing family responsibilities between men and women is that more and more fathers in the reporting countries are now benefiting from parental leave. The maternity benefit period has been extended in most countries.

63. In most of the countries which have reported on women in public life, it appears that there has been a net increase in the number of women in local and district level positions. There has also been a rise in the number of women representatives in some legislative bodies. However, the pyramid of inequalities continues as in the 1980s. The increase in the number of women in Government ministries, cabinet positions and heads of state is very slow whilst, over the last 10 years, there has been a decrease in the number of women parliamentarians in the region as a whole.

64. In a majority of the reporting countries, policy effort has been directed to improving women's general position in society. These countries have implemented the United Nations Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979). The Ministerial Declaration (1993) on opposing violence against women in Europe reflects concerted effort on the part of Governments in the region to undertake special policies to eliminate violence against women at all levels.

65. There are several areas in which new institutional machinery has been established or strengthened since the adoption of the 1985 Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies. These institutional mechanisms include Equal Opportunity Commissions, Emancipation Policy Plan, Office of Equal Opportunities, Ombudsmen and Equal Status Council.

66. It is difficult to pinpoint the movement towards the advancement of women in the European region since the reporting countries reflect progress in various directions, and in varying degrees. However, it can be highlighted that participation rates of women have improved or remained stable whilst the adjustments in the labour market, particularly in equality of remuneration, are advancing very slowly. At the level of policy, legislation and institutional change, Governments have moved much faster than improvement in economic life.

ANNEX

NATIONAL REPORTS FROM ECE COUNTRIES FOR THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

SEPTEMBER 1995 -- BEIJING, CHINA

Bulgaria:	National Report on the Implementation of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women in the Republic of Bulgaria.
Canada:	Overview, Canada's National Report to the United Nations for the Fourth World Conference on Women (July 1994).
Denmark:	Equality in Denmark, the Danish National Report to the Fourth World Conference on Women 1995, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (30 May 1994).
Finland:	Report by Finland on the Implementation of the Nairobi Strategies.
France:	Avant-Projet de Rapport National.
Kazakhstan:	Executive Summary, Current Status of Women and the Family Kazakhstan, National Committee for the Preparation of the World Conference and Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan (13 June 1994).
Lithuania:	The Main Data for the Preparation of National Report for the Fourth World Conference on Women, Deputy Chairman of the Lithuanian Preparatory Committee for the Fourth World Conference on Women (22 June 1994).
Netherlands:	Ten years after Nairobi: Report of the Measures in the Netherlands to implement the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies(NFLS) (1985-1995),Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (1 June 1994).
Norway:	Draft National Report of Norway, Fourth World Conference on Women, Det Kongelige Barne-og Familie Department (26 May 1995).
Portugal:	Summary of the National Report, Ministerio do Empreco da Seguranca Social, Comssao Para a Igualdade e Para os Direitos das Mulheres (28 June 1994).
Russian Federation:	Main Data from the National Report, (July 1994).
Sweden:	Shared Power/Responsibility, National Report by the Government of Sweden for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (June 1994).
United Kingdom:	Developments in the United Kingdom in Areas of Interest to Women, Department of Employment (20 June 1994).